# Conclusion

Such is the story of developments which offer promise to the "necessarily existent" small high schools and to the elementary school children who will attend them in the decade of the 1960's.

The need for change quite naturally varies greatly from school to school. But the need is acknowledged among nearly all. Some will continue with experiments described in this booklet, and it is hoped that all will follow the progress of these experiments very closely for significant implications to their own situations.

There is considerable evidence—and it increases daily—that we are well on our way to a period of unprecedented experimentation among educational institutions of all sizes serving all ages. The need for change seems to have been accepted by the public as well as by the educators: the paramount question before us then, relates to determining the effectiveness of eac' experiment in improving learning. If proven effective, what conditions must exist for the maximum effectiveness of each experiment, and what are its precise uses?

Among our small high schools the selection by each school of a unique combination of proven experiments to fit its peculiar local situation may well prove decisive. The potential combinations are limitless, but the potential danger is that one school may attempt to copy en toto the experiments being used successfully in a neighboring school without considering local needs. In such a situation a fiasco could result that would deter any further consideration of even the most promising practices used elsewhere.

This is most aptly illustrated by the subtleties involved in the development of a flexible schedule that really works effectively for a particular small high school. One school may indeed make applicable to its situation certain basic principles of flexible scheduling borrowed from another school. If such a schedule is made to work for the second school, however, its differences in detail from that of the first may well be greater than its similarities.

In still a third school the selected combination of new practices may be incorporated into a traditional schedule and yet be greatly



1A

effective. A reexamination of any school program must begin with an accurate appraisal of the local situation and its many variables. Proposed action can never be considered without this foundation.

Finally, the decisive need of our small high schools is for educational leadership based on an accurate knowledge of current research findings. Traditionally, our citizens have rightfully abhorred any outside domination of their local schools. However, the findings of educational experimentation and research constitute in no sense "outside domination," but rather are a compendium of "neutral" suggestions, which may be studied, observed, and applied as desirable in a local situation.

In the past, such findings have all too often never reached the administrators of small high schools. In some instances, the local high school principal, though alert to these findings, may have been unduly cautious lest his urging of their consideration be construed as outside domination.

But increasing indications today point to a new era in education. Local citizens and educators have a heightened interest in innovation, and new nationwide channels are opening up to report new educational developments. A renewed appreciation of the vital role of our schools in developing an enlightened citizenry needed to make our democracy effective is the most encouraging sign as we enter upon these new adventures in education.

○